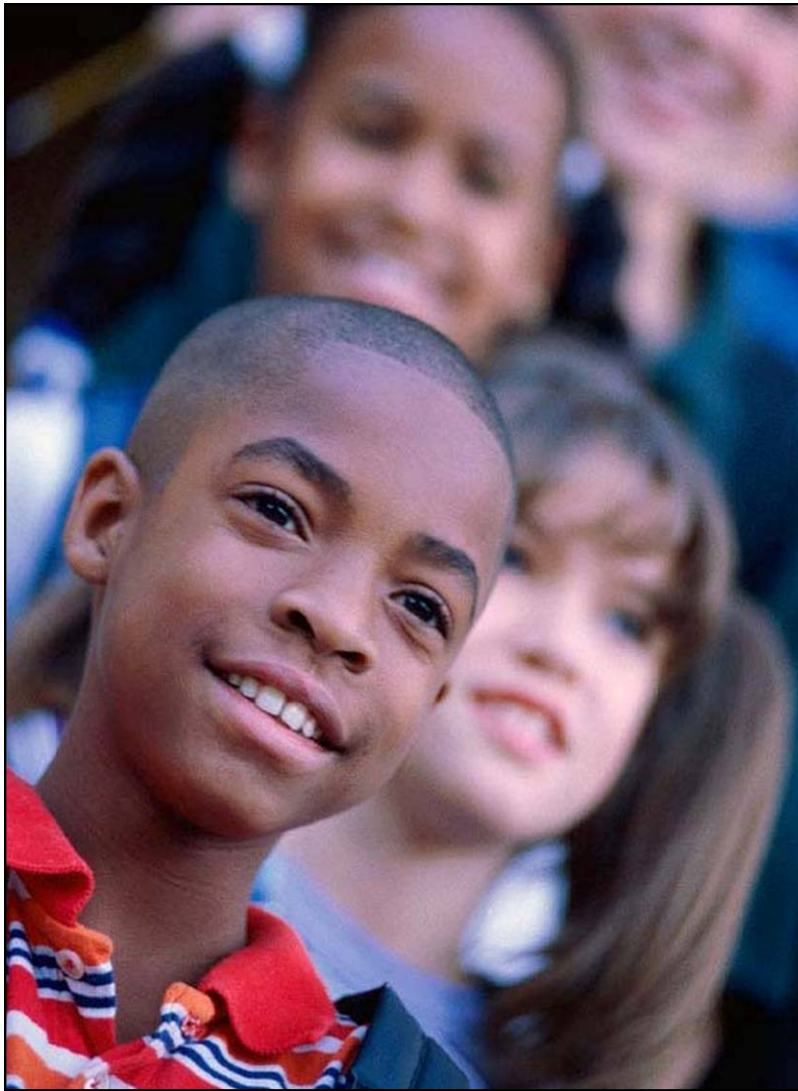


Continuous Improvement Process For After School (CIPAS)



Your Guide To High Quality,
Sustainable After School Programs
Using Our Web Based Virtual Process

21st Century
Grant Services



Welcome to CIPAS

The realities of the 21st Century make after school programming a vital part of your community. To achieve excellence there must be a vision and a steadfast commitment to ongoing reflection, evaluation, and program improvement. The Continuous Improvement Process for Afterschool (CIPAS) is a tool to help you to get the most out of your planning and the action steps you take.

Originally designed for the National Community Education Association (NCEA), the CIPAS tool will assist you in your after school work by providing a system for continually improving the programs and services offered at your site.

Our virtual approach combines the latest research about after school best practices. The CIPAS tool is fully field tested and incorporates a set of strategies that allow you to continually assess, plan, improve, and sustain your program.

Congratulations

Congratulations on taking an important step and welcome to the Continuous Improvement Process for After School (CIPAS) family. By expressing interest in using the Virtual CIPAS tool, you are joining many other after school practitioners across the country who also want to provide the best after school programs for their students, families, and communities.

Creating a high quality and sustainable program requires great skills and strong school-community partnerships. By engaging CIPAS you are making a commitment to creating strong programs and services. We consider your relationship important and want to assist you as best as we can.

Sincerely,

Duane Rupert, Ed.D.
Director of Education Services
21st Century Grant Services



Self-Assessment Tip Sheet

Now that you have the CIPAS Manual in hand and are eager to get going, we want to provide you with a few tips that will be helpful as you engage the Virtual Self Assessment Process

Familiarize Yourself and Your Staff with the CIPAS Rubrics and Process

Distribute hard copies of the Self-Assessment Rubric to your staff and Advisory Committee. Discuss the CIPAS rubrics and process before conducting virtual self-assessments.

Reviewing the hard copies will allow you to obtain an overview of the program and discuss the specifics prior to your self assessment.

The “Director” level rubrics are designed to assess the overall capacity of the organization to support after school programs.

Designate Self-Assessment Team Members

Assign persons who will be responsible for engaging the Virtual After School Review (VASR). Training and passwords will be provided by 21st Century Grant Services for those staff members assigned to complete the web-based self-assessment process.

Perform Self-Assessment

Review each component, one at a time, before attempting to complete the entire process. Study the criteria and examples at each level. Only choose one of the three levels for each quality indicator once you feel you can clearly state evidence to support that choice.

Assign an Appropriate Level for All Quality Components

The rubrics contain seven quality component areas. The overall program director, with support from program partners, advisory council members and staff will complete the “Director” rubrics for the organization.



Upload Supporting Documentation

The CIPAS Virtual After School Review (VASR) system supports uploading of evidence through a web-based system. VASR also accepts written summaries when original documents do not exist. In some cases, you may find that you are referring to one document on numerous occasions as evidence. For example, your Advisory Council minutes may be evidence under Community & Family Involvement and again under Financing.

Be Specific and Do Not Assume Anything

The CIPAS Review Team, most likely, will not know your program or your community. Paint as clear and thorough a picture of your program as possible. The Review Team will examine your responses and documentation prior to making comments and recommendations.

The team expects to see various answers, as there is no one right way to describe operational issues. Remember to only provide information that can be verified.

Supporting Documentation

Every program is different, so supporting documentation for each after school program will understandably vary. As you gather and upload this important information, you may wonder what other programs have provided along the way. Here are a few examples that others have used in gathering documentation in support of their self-assessment rating for various components:

- ✓ Enrollment figures
- ✓ Minutes from advisory council meetings
- ✓ School board, City, or county policy statements or memoranda of understanding (MOU's)
- ✓ News releases
- ✓ Afterschool program brochures
- ✓ Examples of letters and postcards from advocacy campaigns (e.g. The Afterschool Alliance's Lights On! Days)
- ✓ Promotional materials sent out to parents, businesses, etc.
- ✓ Staff development exercise sheets or program policy papers
- ✓ Program policy documents
- ✓ Employee handbooks
- ✓ Examples of afterschool clubs and enrichment activities offered
- ✓ Focus group data
- ✓ Evidence of surveys given to parents, youth, and school contacts
- ✓ Financial reports
- ✓ Examples of curricula or activities

Review Team Responsibilities

VASR Data Review

- ◆ Thoroughly review all uploaded documents and statements
- ◆ Contact the Director to verify uploaded data or to gain greater understanding
- ◆ Generate comments based on review of evidence for each quality indicator
- ◆ Create list of commendations and opportunities for improvement based on review

Post Review Procedures

CIPAS Report Prepared

The Review Team chairperson reviews input provided from each Review Team member and produces a draft of a preliminary report to be shared with the Review Team members within two weeks of evaluation.

CIPAS Draft Report Shared for Review Before Official Report is Submitted

Once the draft has final approval of each Review Team member, the preliminary final report will be sent to the Program Director for review of factual content.

Final CIPAS Report Submitted to Program Director

A final report will be sent to each Review Team member and delivered to the program within two months of completion of program reviews. The final CIPAS report will contain commendations and recommendations that can be used for



Pricing and Services

Please consult with 21st Century Grant Services for pricing information that is most suitable to your needs.

What CIPAS Includes

To review, CIPAS includes: the development of a portfolio through the VASR process; a review of the VASR portfolio by the Review Team; usually made up of local, state, and national leaders – who will validate the self-assessment portfolio, make recommendations, and collectively submit a report for your review.

The final CIPAS report will contain commendations and recommendations that can be used for continuous improvement and strategic planning purposes.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the philosophy behind the CIPAS tool?

21st Century Grant Services has been involved in the continuous improvement process business since 1999. The Continuous Improvement Process for After School (CIPAS) was developed for NCEA (by our Director of Educational Services, Duane Rupert) to encourage after school program leaders to engage in guided self-reflection and generate suggestions to feed a strategic planning process for program improvement.

What Program Components Are Reviewed By CIPAS?

The “Director” level rubrics were inspired by the Promising Practices research done by the Academy for Educational Development and refined through extensive field work. They assess an organization’s capacity to support after school programs and include: Community and Family Involvement; Programming; Management and Administration; Staffing and Training; Financing; Research, Evaluation, and Knowledge Base; and, Policy and Advocacy

What is your recommendation for initial CIPAS visits?

Engaging CIPAS is a fairly rigorous process and it is helpful to have some maturity as an organization prior to launching any improvement process. It might be helpful, however, to use the CIPAS self-assessment rubrics as a guide during the initial planning and implementation of your after school program.

Would it be helpful for a first year program to participate in the NCEA CIPAS process?

If CIPAS were purely an evaluation, it would be recommended that you wait until at least the end of the first year of operation before engaging in the CIPAS process. Since CIPAS is designed to encourage self-reflection and provide suggestions for improvement, it is recommended that the most appropriate time to get the optimal benefit out of this service is about mid-way during the first year of implementation. One of the many strengths of this process, however, is that it works with both new and mature programs.

Perhaps the best way to think of CIPAS is to think of it as a technical assistance opportunity. The advice and suggestions contained within the report to the Program Director will be based upon where your program is on a continuum of after school components and where it most likely would want to be in the upcoming years.



For Further Information

If you have questions about this program or any of the other services we have available please contact:

Duane Rupert, Ed.D
Director of Educational Services

Phone: (843) 319-4744

Email: DRupert@21stCenturyGrants.com

Website: 21stCenturyGrants.com



"What you believe, you can achieve!"



Sample Quality Indicators: Program Level

Community & Family Involvement

- * Open houses and community events are scheduled regularly.
- * An advisory group is formed.

Programming

- * Academic enrichment, youth development, recreational activities are provided.
- * The program uses technology as an instructional tool.

Management & Administration

- * Logistical issues (space, snacks, etc.) are arranged.
- * Contracts or agreements are in place with partners and collaborators.

Staffing & Training

- * On-going orientation, training, and evaluation are provided for all staff and volunteers.
- * Personnel and volunteer manuals are in place.

Financing

- * Funding is leveraged by in-kind and local funds.
- * The program engages partners to support various program components.

Research, Evaluation, & Knowledge Base

- * Program objectives are in place and there is a mechanism to collect data.
- * Evaluation data is used to guide decision-making.

Policy & Advocacy

- * The program staff recognizes that it is appropriate to participate in advocacy activities.
- * The program staff participates in organizations whose purpose is to impact afterschool policy.

NOTES:

Our Mission

We are committed to helping rural and small city Schools secure external funding to provide the means to support enrichment activities and strengthen academic skills for all children.

Grant Writing

Working in consultation with local education personnel, we prepare full funding proposals in response to state, federal, and private foundation RFPs. We have a "full-service" approach, which includes:

- ◆ Developing a project vision with appropriate school staff;
- ◆ Completing a review of literature to support the proposal;
- ◆ Evolving a strong project scenario consistent with grant-givers' goals & objectives;
- ◆ Developing appropriate project milestones, management plans, budgets, and evaluation schemes; and,
- ◆ Ensuring the finished proposal's congruence with terms and conditions of RFP.

Professional Development

The breadth of our staff members' education experience enables us to provide professional development as needed to support funded project planning, implementation, and evaluation. We have provided staff development in the following areas:

- ◆ Strategic Planning;
- ◆ Program Management;
- ◆ Project Evaluation Techniques;
- ◆ Continuous Improvement Models;
- ◆ Personnel Recruitment and Retention;
- ◆ Curriculum Development;
- ◆ And much more.

Project Evaluation Services

Our staff includes university and private sector evaluators, who are prepared to provide a wide range of project evaluation services. For many of our clients we provide complete evaluation support, which includes:

- ◆ Developing appropriate data collection plans;
- ◆ Choosing data storage and retrieval regimens;
- ◆ Selecting appropriate instrumentation and protocols;
- ◆ Conducting validation studies;
- ◆ Completing Semi-Annual and Annual Reports;
- ◆ Providing timely feedback to project staff to support continuous improvement strategies.

All of the above services are available individually, to best suit the needs of your project.

Give us a call and let us explain how we can help with your program or project.



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21st Century Grant Services is a division of C-Store Consulting, Incorporated. We provide a full range of consulting service for small businesses. These services include: Accounting Services; Management Training; Business Planning; Business Evaluation; and Business Site Planning & Design. When it comes to business or education we can do it all.